



### THIS WEEK AT THE THEATRES

**SALT LAKE THEATRE.**—Monday night, "A Trip to Chinatown"; Friday and Saturday evenings and Saturday matinee, Andrew Robson in "Richard Carvel"; **GRAND.**—Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings and Wednesday matinee, Rose Melville in "Sis Hopkins"; Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings and Saturday matinee, "Mickey Finn," musical comedy.

EVERYTHING considered, the business done by J. H. Stoddard and "The Bonnie Brier Bush" company at the Salt Lake theatre last week was little short of phenomenal. The opening night of the engagement, Monday night, drew the poorest of all the houses. This was astonishing to many of Mr. Stoddard's admirers, for they knew he didn't need any advertising in Salt Lake. As the engagement progressed, though, the houses grew larger and it is said that the receipts for the six performances were better than \$5,000. This doesn't seem very big in comparison with the money other far less meritorious attractions have taken out of Salt Lake, but it was a splendid business success.

We are now in the season when people do not feel much like spending money for theatre tickets. Money isn't so plentiful anyway, and with Christ-

mas at hand with all of its manifold drains on every one's purse, the theatres must suffer to a considerable extent. It speaks well for the judgment and discrimination of Salt Lake's playgoers that Mr. Stoddard was patronized so liberally.

No attraction has been seen at the Salt Lake theatre this season or thereabouts that has been more thoroughly worthy. "The Bonnie Brier Bush" is a beautiful play, beautifully acted. In the lobby of the theatre the other night there was an argument as to whether "The Bonnie Brier Bush" will long survive the demise of Mr. Stoddard, which all of us hope will not occur for many years. Mr. Stoddard was practically made the play, it was argued. "The Bonnie Brier Bush" is the life of it, but Mr. Stoddard is its soul. He is the ideal Lachlan Campbell.

The conclusion reached, if a conclusion must be reached, is that when no vote has been taken, was that "The Bonnie Brier Bush" will live a long, long time. For our part we hope it will but we "hate our doots," pretty as the play is.

"Uncle Jimmie" Gibson, ticket taker at the theatre for a generation, was missed by all comers last week and many inquiries were made regarding him. Great regret was generally expressed when it was learned that Mr. Gibson was seriously ill with an attack of erysipelas. It is pleasant to be able to say that he is well along the road to recovery now and that he will be back at the old stand with the next few days. It hardly seems like the theatre without "Uncle Jimmie" on the doo.

Acton Davies, the well-known dramatic critic, writing in the current number of *Ainslie's* on the New York season, has the following to say about a well-known former Salt Lake boy: "The next production was a much more cheerful affair. It came at the end of a week of gloom, and when Mr. Edwin Milroy produced his farce 'My Wife's Husband,' with himself and his wife, Selma Petter, in the principal roles. The success of this jolly little play was instantaneous and complete. In Mr. and Mrs. Milroy it brought to Broadway two admirable comedians who for years have been a wigwag. It is in a comic ditty, of the kind that has been enough to satisfy all possible encore demands, that Butler is quite himself, standing side-reason finds herself under social taboo when she returns to her home village. The nature of her offense is not stated, further than a vague hint that it may have been a morganatic marriage with a continental duke. It may have been a fault, a flagrant sin, or nothing at all blameworthy, wise to the audience, as ever, and rattling off rhymed anecdotes to prove that it is well to have a good-bye laugh when you say good-bye. He is alone in that. But as Mr. Jay who tells of his prettily rustic daughter being aggressively admired in Broadway, he is backed by a row of comedians who wear straw hats and jeans overalls, and fasten b'gosh whiskers under their smooth chins.

In London these annual plays are still called Christmas pantomimes, though the harlequinade has been reduced to about fifteen minutes immediately after the rising of the curtain, so that people who no longer care for the adventures of Clown and Pantaloon, Harlequin and Columbine, may miss them by arriving late. For many years these pieces were deemed worthless for importation to America, as our likings are more for the more elaborate and more elaborate. In the one case, a single author, or perhaps two, must be depended on, and the craftiest of them is as likely to miss their aim as to hit. But the present method of making extravaganzas permits the employment of many experts. Two men devised and wrote "Mother Goose" as it was presented in London, and two more composed the music. The contributors of material for the American version, besides McNally, number eleven rhymesters and tunemakers.

The songs are competitive in a way. Rival authors and contentious publishers are interested diversely. Partisans of these different interests betrayed themselves in the applause on the opening night. But it was too soon to award any prizes for superiority. The test of commercial value is not applied till the whistles and the hummers, the home pianists and the restaurant orchestras make their experiments with the tunes. The words count for something, of course, but the tunes for far more; and one of these, I think, will go through the ordeal and at length get to the hand organs.

Several of the songs are acted elaborately and expensively. One has a new soubrette of the delicately demonstrative type, Lella McIntyre, to declare in its refrain that she is "the rose of the Riviera," and a lot of women and little girls in the skirts and flirts and the coats of dandies, to support her assertion in chorus. An equally handsome and more unusual illustration is given to a husband in which a white scout asks a bevy of Indian girls to marry him. The candidate for bigamy is Harry Butler, very ugly and unsuitable (the cast has no comely tenor, the woosers being played with this incidental exception, by copranos and contraltos), but the singers are idealized savages, who don't slouch or sneak like the real things when they dance, and are brought out picturesquely from

We have it from good authority that he is positively the last season in the character of the Churchill hero, and that next season we shall see him in another role of equal romantic value. As usual, Mr. Robson is credited with an excellent command of the language and a scenic investment not alone adequate in representing the pictorial viewpoint of the play, but also of that sumptuous quality which obtains recognition.

One of the best attractions of the theatre season will be presented at the Salt Lake theatre on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, matinee Wednesday at 3 p. m., when Miss Rose Melville, by all odds the most gifted American character actress, will be seen in her original character of Sis Hopkins, in the pretty pastoral play of the same name. This is the fifth season that Miss Melville has been playing this role, and each year it grows in popularity until now it begins to look as if it might become one of the few ever welcome plays which year after year when the wrecks of less true plays strewn the shores of the theatrical sea. The part of Sis Hopkins is one which appeals to the heart of the audience, and it tells the story of a girl who has been reared among the simplicities and honesties of the good people of Indiana. She gets a glimpse of the evils of the outside world and leaves home an awkward, unsmooth, pathetic little figure. She returns, polished, educated but with the same old heart, and finds that the world which had always characterized her, is not so different.

"Mickey Finn," which comes to the Grand theatre Thursday night, Friday and Saturday, matinee Saturday at 2:15 p. m., promises to be one of the brightest farce comedy offerings of the season. This was written by the late Francis X. and the stars. In this city at least they require no introduction. During the last half dozen years these artists have been here on a few brief minutes' reputation of being thoroughly capable and conscientious entertainers. But in years gone by they had no such pretensions. "Mickey Finn" is a farce comedy, and it is a farce comedy of the first order. It requires a complete set of scenery for each of the three acts, and most of the requirements in a most unobtrusive manner, and have surrounded themselves with a company of high-class people.

STORIES ABOUT PLAYERS. Players are as much a part of the well-regulated human family in which accidents are bound to occur as any one else, and the frequent and oftentimes ludicrous slips in dialogue during the presentation of a play are proof of the fact. It is told of an amateur in a western city, playing a part in a temperance drama, that he had the line: "And I promise never to drink another drop." But the young man, becoming a bit flustered, and with confidence and distinctness: "And I promise never to drop another drink."

Blanche Weaver, an actress in the company supporting "Richard Carvel," has hastened to cover up the lines with his next speech. But he was not quite quick enough to conceal the blunder of the actor, and the audience, laughing and a laugh went up that interrupted the action of the play and caused wonder in the rear of the house, where the character of the play was not so much as to be over come with mortification that when the curtain went down she wept and would not be comforted.

The wife of Wilton Lackaye is ever anxious that her husband should be

satisfied with her purchases. Somewhat, when she wished to buy a new dress, she just before leaving New York this fall, she hauled the protesting Wilton with her to the milliner's. The milliner being engaged, an assistant showed Mrs. Lackaye some hats and quoted their prices. Then the milliner herself took the customer in charge, and a more minute inspection of the wares was made. Mrs. Lackaye looked on as helplessly as any other man in the same circumstances. Finally it came to a choice between two hats, and Mrs. Lackaye said: "Let me see what is the price of this one?" "That is \$35, madame," replied the milliner. "Why, your assistant told me the price was \$20," remarked Mrs. Lackaye, with some surprise. "Well, some one was absent from rehearsal," explained Mr. Lackaye to his wife, in sotto voce.

Irene Cromwell is the feminine counterpart of the Babes of Toyland company, and doubles in those interesting characters, Little Miss Muffet and the smallest of the French dolls. But Miss Cromwell is ambitious out of all proportion to her weight, which is eighty-nine pounds net, and her height, which is four feet eleven inches. Recently she confessed to Librettist McDonough that she wished to do something worth while; she wanted to play a strong scene and have a chance to display her talent. McDonough wore a studied expression for a moment. Then he replied: "Eureka! I have an idea that will fit you."

"What is it?" inquired the pleasant little girl. "I will arrange a fierce quarrel between you and a canary bird," replied McDonough. In the final act of "Miss Elizabeth's Prisoner," the Criterion theatre, there is a promise for a few brief minutes that a good, old-fashioned sword fight will serve to enliven things for those who like that particular sort of thing on the stage, says the New York Times. Indeed, Miss Elizabeth herself does her very best to encourage the rival lovers of the play to "get together" after the accustomed manner of the heroes and villains of romantic plays. But for once the fight fails to come off as scheduled. The sword duels on the stage has always had much interest for audiences. Shakespeare seems to have found it so in his time, for his plays abound with sword fights. Even in "Hamlet" there is the contest with rapier in the last act—an incident that arouses the audience from the spell of the most pathetic prince. This duel is quite a test of the actor's ability, for, although he may read well and show a subtle understanding of the philosophy of his author, yet if he cannot come out to advantage in the contest, with Lorraine he betrays that he has not been properly trained in his profession. Here is one place in which Edwin Forster, who has been so successful in the thoroughness of his education, is not an ideal Hamlet, especially in appearance, but he has mastered the art of fencing, and even when he was well advanced in life and a little gouty he handled the foil in this scene beautifully.

Charles Fechter fought in the French manner with a sort of theatricalism, just as young Alexander Salvini handled the foil in the scene years afterward. One of the most graceful and spirited of the fencers was Edwin Booth—cool, resolute and elegant. One can see him now as he came on with Horatio, steepled of all with a sword, a slender and trim, in deep black, handsome and picturesque. He fought his bouts slowly, gaining in intensity with the onset, and making the climax work of the hottest sort. Mr. Booth was a good fencer, and had practiced the art from boyhood, although he was not comparable with Mr. Bellevue, who is a master.

There are splendid fights in Shakespeare's "Richard III" and "Macbeth," and one of the delights of playgoers in olden times was to see these combats, especially in the days of Edmund Kean and George Frederick Cook. Junius Brutus Booth modeled his fight upon those of the great actors, and followed his father. E. L. Davenport fought much in the same way, but at the conclusion, having lost his sword, he rushed toward Richmond with his sword toward Richmond with his sword.

The elder Booth, one night at the Holiday street theatre in Baltimore, in the fight with Richmond, (the part of the latter played by E. L. Tilton), being not quite himself, would not give up. They fought for nearly fifteen minutes, the audience howling, and finally Tilton struck him across the nose, breaking the bridge. His voice was never the same afterward, having a nasal inflection. E. L. Davenport was a good fighter with cutlasses in nautical dramas—two up and one down, as the formula was. He had learned the art from the celebrated Cooke in London.

All of the older actors knew something of the use of the sword, such knowledge was indispensable. There are some good combats in the modern plays used by Sothern and Hackett, and there was a striking example in "If I Were King," where Villon and his enemy engaged by the light of lanterns. In the broadsword encounters in the old melodramas the sword had a large field of curved blade, which served as a means of protecting the person who held it from severe blows, and the fighting was done to the low music of the orchestra, which was heightened or diminished according to the variations of the combat.

Dutton Cook, who was familiar with these combats at the theatre in London, describes how the fighters reared higher and higher, each performer being allowed a fair share of the feats accomplished. The swords clashed and showers of sparks fell, to the stern staccato music of the band, while thunders of applause came from the audience. This sort of stage combat has been so much busied that it is long ago, however, for Johnson in "The Rehearsal," says: "But, Mr. Bayes, might we not have a little fighting, for I love those plays where they cut and slash one another on the stage for a whole hour together."

The intensity of the pistol duel is more in the preparation than the actual encounter—the arrival of the principals and seconds, the measuring off of the ground, and the assignment of the adversaries. In one or two plays—such, for example, as "Frou-Frou"—just as the duellists fire the heroine rushes on and receives the bullet.

There is sometimes a humorous treatment of the situation, as in "The Rivals," where Bob Acres has the engagement to meet Captain Absolute. How Mr. Jefferson elaborates this scene, and how much mirth he extracts from it, playgoers know. Thomas Jefferson, the son of Joseph Jefferson, has a good appreciation of humor, and he likes to tell a story or utter a phrase, or even a single word, after preaching for ten minutes, stopped suddenly and exclaimed: "Brothers, I have a dog at home that must be peculiarly fond of paper. He has eaten a part of my sermon, but I have not delivered, and I'll have to stop here."

After the meeting a woman met the clergyman at the door and, after shaking him by the hand, asked: "Doctor, I want to know if that dog of yours has any puppies. If so, I want to get one and give it to my minister."

"A 'cut' reporter was sent to interview Melba a few days ago. He had his questions written out carefully. When the queen of grand opera shook the spray of the Campanella from her shapely feet and faced the lad he was almost speechless. Finally he managed to mumble out: 'I hear you've taken up ragtime like the other monarchs of Europe!'"

"Ragtime! Me! Horrible! Why, ragtime is only comic opera on the half shell!"

And the "cut" is wondering how such a haughty creature can sing the gentle and repentant Marquette.

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